(b) to (d) The term of Office of the Board is for a duration of two years beginning from 28th August, 2006. The Board will advise the Government in the formulation of the overall development programme in the handloom sector keeping in view socio-economic cultural and artistic perspective. Present strength of the Board is 60 consisting of Minister of Textiles as Chairman, one Vice-chairman, 9 Official Members, 48 Non-Official Members and Development Commissioner (Handlooms) as Member Secretary. While Senior Officers of various Ministries are selected as Official Members on the basis of their experience about the Handloom Sector, the Non-Official Members are representatives of Weavers/Dignitaries/Expertise associated with the Handloom Sector having knowledge of ground realities. Their selection is made by the Minister of Textiles.

(e) to (g) No such instance has occurred so far.

Database for handloom products

4580. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Textiles has prepared a list of handloom products, with a proper database, doing a country wide survey, to be registered as geographical indications;

(b) if so, how many such products have got geographical indications so far, and how many products are still to be registered;

(c) whether Indian handloom mark has been registered under Trade Marks Act; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government of India has written letters to all the State Governments to send the proposals for registration of traditional handloom items under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. As per the reports received from the State Governments, about 80 items are to be registered, out of which, 12 items have already been registered under the Act.

(c) Application to register Handloom mark has already been submitted to the concerned authorities in the Month of November, 2006.

(d) Does not arise.

Loan waiver for handloom weavers

†4581. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister had made an announcement that loans of handloom weavers will also be waived on the lines of farmers in Punjab, if so, whether it has been implemented;

(b) the number of handloom weavers whose loans have been waived so far, State-wise; and

(c) whether any concession or rebate is being provided to handloom weavers, engaged in weaving of silk sarees in Varanasi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No, Sir. However, at a function to launch the Handloom Mark on the 28th June 2006, the Hon'ble Prime Minister had *inter alia* stated that credit to handloom cooperatives have been choked because of a debt overhang and desired to look at the problem of debt which is afflicting handloom cooperatives so that this can be rescheduled or cooperatives recapitalised in a manner similar to that done for cooperative banks through the Vaidyanathan Committee.

(b) Nil.

(c) The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles is implementing a number of schemes for handloom weavers throughout the country including handloom weavers engaged in weaving of silk sarees in Varanasi, to enhance production, productivity and efficiency of the handloom sector and to enhance the income and socio-economic status of the weavers by upgrading their skills and providing infrastructural input and marketing support.

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†Original notice o the question was received in Hindi